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ABSTRACT

This report, part of a series that offers population and housing data collected by Census 2000, presents data on the educational attainment of people over age 25 years in the United States, describing education distributions for the country, including regions, states, counties, and places with populations of 100,000 or more. Overall, U.S. education levels were high and rising in 2002. Age differences in educational attainment were large, with the middle-aged population having the highest levels of education. Women's educational levels were close to those of men. The "Asian alone" race group led in attaining bachelor's degrees and advanced degrees. Large differences among races existed at all levels of education. Regional educational differences shifted during the 1990s, and no one region could lay claim to having the best-educated population. States with low high school completion rates were catching up to the rest of the states. Higher percentages of college graduates lived in suburban counties and counties with colleges. Places with universities attracted the greatest concentration of people with doctoral degrees. Sex differences in education varied along the age spectrum. (SM)

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ED 482 415

Educational Attainment: 2000

Census 2000 Brief

Issued August 2003

C2KBR-24

By
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The education levels of the United States population reached an all-time high, according to Census 2000.[1] Of the 182.2 million people aged 25 and over on April 1, 2000, 80 percent had a high school diploma or more, and 24 percent had completed at least a bachelor's degree.

Education has been included in the United States census questionnaire since 1840, when information was collected on literacy of the population 20 years and over. Since that time, questions on education have become more complex. From 1940 to 1980, the census inquired about the number of years of school each person had completed. In 1990 and 2000, the question was updated to reflect current interest in both level of school completed and the types of degrees (if any) people had received. The Census 2000 question allowed respondents to choose from a list of 16 educational levels, ranging from no schooling completed to professional or doctoral degrees (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.
Reproduction of the Question on Educational Attainment From Census 2000

9 What is the highest degree or level of school this person has COMPLETED? *Mark* [x] *ONE box. If currently enrolled, mark the previous grade or highest degree received.*

- ☐ No schooling completed
- ☐ Nursery school to 4th grade
- ☐ 5th grade or 6th grade
- ☐ 7th grade or 8th grade
- ☐ 9th grade
- ☐ 10th grade
- ☐ 11th grade
- ☐ 12th grade, **NO DIPLOMA**
- ☐ **HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE** — high school DIPLOMA or the equivalent *(for example: GED)*
- ☐ Some college credit, but less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 or more years of college, no degree
- ☐ Associate degree *(for example: AA, AS)*
- ☐ Bachelor's degree *(for example: BA, AB, BS)*
- ☐ Master's degree *(for example: MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA)*
- ☐ Professional degree *(for example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)*
- ☐ Doctorate degree *(for example: PhD, EdD)*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 questionnaire.

This report, part of a series that presents population and housing data collected by

[1] Comparison with the 1990 census shows a significantly higher proportion of the population 25 and over in 2000 completing each of the following thresholds or more: 5th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade without a diploma, high school diploma, some college, associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, professional degree, and doctoral degree. Censuses from 1940 through 1980 showed even lower levels of education at the high school and bachelor's degree level (see Figure 3). The text of this report discusses data for the United States, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are shown in Table 1 and Figure 4.

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United States Census 2000

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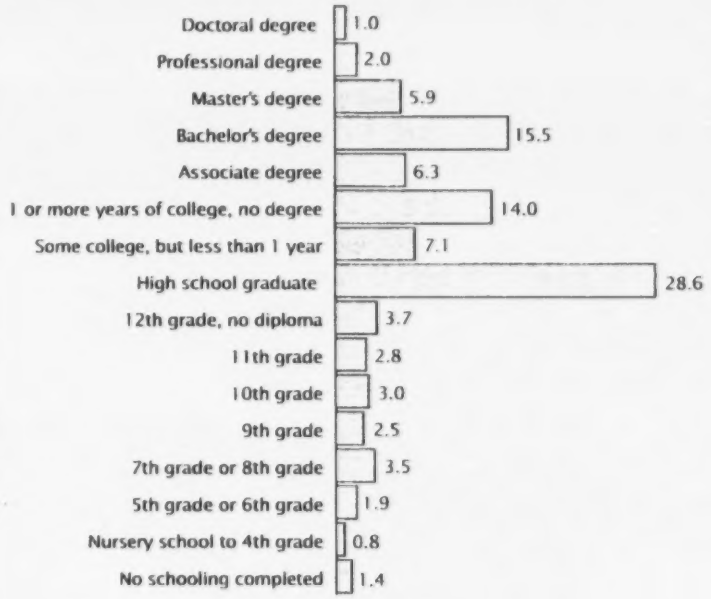
Census 2000, presents data on the educational attainment of people 25 years and over in the United States. This report describes education distributions for the United States, including regions, states, counties, and places with populations of 100,000 or more.

Education levels in the United States were high and rising.

In 2000, most people 25 years and over in the United States had earned a high school diploma or higher degree (Figure 2).[2] The three most commonly achieved education levels were high school graduate (29 percent), bachelor's degree (16 percent), and 1 or more years of college, but no degree (14 percent). More than 1 in 20 people had obtained a master's degree (6 percent), an associate degree (6 percent), or completed some college, but less than 1 year (7 percent). Professional and doctoral degrees were relatively rare, as were the categories of education below high school. No one of these education levels accounted for as much as 4 percent of the population 25 and over.

Figure 2.
Highest Educational Attainment Level of the Population 25 Years and Over: 2000
(In percent. Data based on sample. For more information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3.

More than half the U.S. population 25 and over in 2000 (52 percent) had completed at least some college education (Table 1). Just under one quarter (24 percent) had a bachelor's degree or more. Nine percent had an advanced degree (master's degree, professional degree, or doctoral degree).

Growth in the population 25 and over contributed to an increase in the number of people with high school or more education: 146.5 million in 2000, an increase of 27.0 million over 1990. The number with a bachelor's degree or more increased by 12.2 million to 44.5 million, while the population with less than a high school diploma actually decreased during the decade from 1990 to 2000, falling by 3.6 million to 35.7 million.

The high levels of education observed in 2000 reflect a steady increase in educational attainment that took place over much of the preceding century. Figure 3 shows the levels of high school and college completion for the 25-and-over population from the censuses of 1940 to 2000.[3] In 1940, only 24 percent of the population 25 and over had completed high school. During a span of 60 years, high school has gone from being the mark of the educated minority of the population to the minimum education level for 4 out of 5 adults.

College completion rates also increased from 1940 to 2000. While just under 1 adult in 20 held a bachelor's degree in 1940, almost 1 adult in 4 had attained this educational level in 2000. For both levels of schooling recorded here (high school or more, and

[2] The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population. As with all surveys, estimates may vary from the actual values because of sampling variation or other factors. All statements made in this report have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

[3] From 1940 to 1980, the census question on educational attainment asked about years of school completed, rather than about completion of degrees. For the purposes of this comparison, people with 12 or more years of education were considered high school graduates, while those with 16 or more years of education were considered college graduates. For further discussion of the difference between asking about years and about degrees see Robert Kominski and Paul Siegel, "Measuring Education in the Current Population Survey," *Monthly Labor Review*, September 1993, pp. 34-38.

Table 1.

Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Over for the United States, Regions, and States, and for Puerto Rico: 1990 and 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)

Area	1990					2000				
		Percent					Percent			
	Population 25 and over	High school graduate or more	Some college or more	Bachelor's degree or more	Advanced degree	Population 25 and over	High school graduate or more	Some college or more	Bachelor's degree or more	Advanced degree
United States	**158,868,436**	**75.2**	**45.2**	**20.3**	**7.2**	**182,211,639**	**80.4**	**51.8**	**24.4**	**8.9**
Region										
Northeast	33,544,628	76.2	44.0	22.8	9.0	35,828,187	81.6	50.9	27.5	11.0
Midwest	37,873,006	77.1	43.1	18.4	6.3	41,537,007	83.5	51.1	22.9	7.9
South	54,335,585	71.3	42.3	18.7	6.5	64,921,533	77.7	49.0	22.5	8.1
West	33,115,217	78.6	53.7	22.7	7.7	39,924,912	80.5	57.7	26.2	9.2
State										
Alabama	2,545,969	66.9	37.4	15.7	5.5	2,887,400	75.3	44.9	19.0	6.9
Alaska	323,429	86.6	57.9	23.0	8.0	379,556	88.3	60.5	24.7	8.6
Arizona	2,301,177	78.7	52.5	20.3	7.0	3,256,184	81.0	56.7	23.5	8.4
Arkansas	1,496,150	66.3	33.6	13.3	4.5	1,731,200	75.3	41.2	16.7	5.7
California	18,695,499	76.2	53.9	23.4	8.1	21,298,900	76.8	56.7	26.6	9.5
Colorado	2,107,072	84.4	57.9	27.0	9.0	2,776,632	86.9	63.7	32.7	11.1
Connecticut	2,198,963	79.2	49.7	27.2	11.0	2,295,617	84.0	55.5	31.4	13.3
Delaware	428,499	77.5	44.8	21.4	7.7	514,658	82.6	51.2	25.0	9.4
District of Columbia	409,131	73.1	51.9	33.3	17.2	384,535	77.8	57.2	39.1	21.0
Florida	8,887,168	74.4	44.3	18.3	6.3	11,024,645	79.9	51.1	22.3	8.1
Georgia	4,023,420	70.9	41.3	19.3	6.4	5,185,965	78.6	49.9	24.3	8.3
Hawaii	709,820	80.1	51.3	22.9	7.1	802,477	84.6	56.1	26.2	8.4
Idaho	601,292	79.7	49.3	17.7	5.3	787,505	84.7	56.2	21.7	6.8
Illinois	7,293,930	76.2	46.2	21.0	7.5	7,973,671	81.4	53.7	26.1	9.5
Indiana	3,489,470	75.6	37.4	15.6	6.4	3,893,278	82.1	44.9	19.4	7.2
Iowa	1,776,798	80.1	41.6	16.9	5.2	1,895,856	86.1	50.0	21.2	6.5
Kansas	1,565,936	81.3	48.4	21.1	7.0	1,701,207	86.0	56.2	25.8	8.7
Kentucky	2,333,833	64.6	32.9	13.6	5.5	2,646,397	74.1	40.6	17.1	6.9
Louisiana	2,536,994	68.3	36.6	16.1	5.6	2,775,468	74.8	42.4	18.7	6.5
Maine	795,613	78.8	41.7	18.8	6.1	869,893	85.4	49.2	22.9	7.9
Maryland	3,122,665	78.4	50.3	26.5	10.9	3,495,595	83.8	57.1	31.4	13.4
Massachusetts	3,962,223	80.0	50.3	27.2	10.6	4,273,275	84.8	57.5	33.2	13.7
Michigan	5,842,642	76.8	44.5	17.4	6.4	6,415,941	83.4	52.1	21.8	8.1
Minnesota	2,770,562	82.4	49.4	21.8	6.3	3,164,345	87.9	59.1	27.4	8.3
Mississippi	1,538,997	64.3	36.8	14.7	5.1	1,757,517	72.9	43.5	16.9	5.8
Missouri	3,291,579	73.9	40.8	17.8	6.1	3,634,906	81.3	48.6	21.6	7.6
Montana	507,851	81.0	47.5	19.8	5.7	586,621	87.2	55.9	24.4	7.2
Nebraska	996,049	81.8	47.1	18.9	5.9	1,087,241	86.6	55.3	23.7	7.3
Nevada	789,638	78.8	47.2	15.3	5.2	1,310,176	80.7	51.3	18.2	6.1
New Hampshire	713,894	82.2	50.5	24.4	7.9	823,987	87.4	57.3	28.7	10.0
New Jersey	5,166,233	76.7	45.6	24.9	8.8	5,657,799	82.1	52.7	29.8	11.0
New Mexico	922,590	75.1	46.4	20.4	8.3	1,134,801	78.9	52.3	23.5	9.8
New York	11,818,569	74.8	45.3	23.1	9.9	12,542,536	79.1	51.3	27.4	11.8
North Carolina	4,253,494	70.0	41.0	17.4	5.4	5,282,994	78.1	49.7	22.5	7.2
North Dakota	396,550	76.7	48.6	18.1	4.5	408,585	83.9	56.0	22.0	5.5
Ohio	6,924,764	75.7	39.3	17.0	5.9	7,411,740	83.0	46.9	21.1	7.4
Oklahoma	1,995,424	74.6	44.1	17.8	6.0	2,203,173	80.6	49.1	20.3	6.8
Oregon	1,855,369	81.5	52.6	20.6	7.0	2,250,998	85.1	58.9	25.1	8.7
Pennsylvania	7,872,932	74.7	36.1	17.9	6.6	8,266,284	81.9	43.8	22.4	8.4
Rhode Island	658,956	72.0	42.6	21.3	7.8	694,573	78.0	50.2	25.6	9.7
South Carolina	2,167,590	68.3	38.8	16.6	5.4	2,596,010	76.3	46.4	20.4	6.9
South Dakota	430,500	77.1	43.4	17.2	4.9	474,359	84.6	51.7	21.5	6.0
Tennessee	3,139,066	67.1	37.0	16.0	5.4	3,744,928	75.9	44.3	19.6	6.8
Texas	10,310,605	72.1	46.5	20.3	6.5	12,790,893	75.7	50.8	23.2	7.6
Utah	897,321	85.1	57.9	22.3	6.8	1,197,892	87.7	63.1	26.1	8.3
Vermont	357,245	80.8	46.2	24.3	8.9	404,223	86.4	54.1	29.4	11.1
Virginia	3,974,814	75.2	48.5	24.5	9.1	4,666,574	81.5	55.5	29.5	11.6
Washington	3,126,390	83.8	55.9	22.9	7.0	3,827,507	87.1	62.2	27.7	9.3
West Virginia	1,171,766	66.0	29.4	12.3	4.8	1,233,581	75.2	35.8	14.8	5.9
Wisconsin	3,094,226	78.6	41.5	17.7	5.6	3,475,878	85.1	50.5	22.4	7.2
Wyoming	277,769	83.0	49.9	18.8	5.7	315,663	87.9	56.9	21.9	7.0
Puerto Rico	**1,952,297**	**49.7**	**28.7**	**14.3**	**3.6**	**2,288,326**	**60.0**	**37.7**	**18.3**	**4.7**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3; 1990 Census of Population.

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college or more), the largest rate of growth was in the period 1960 to 1980. From 1990 to 2000, the increase in the percentage of people completing a bachelor's or higher degree was about the same as the percentage-point increase for the previous decade, and only slightly below the rate from 1970 to 1980.

Age differences in educational attainment were large.

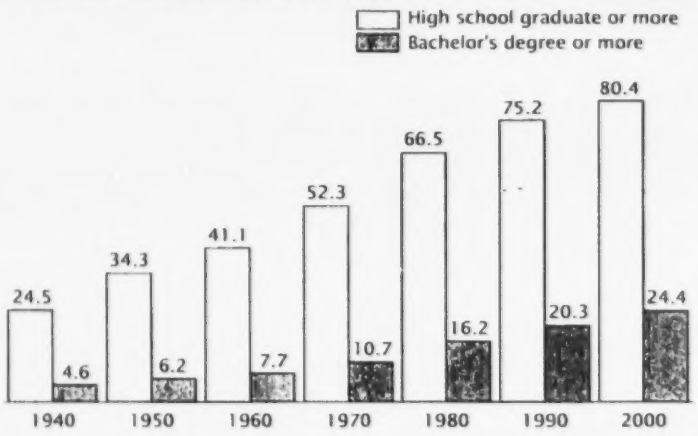
In 2000, the middle-aged population had the highest levels of education—45- to 49-year-olds were highest in high school graduation and some college or more; 50- to 54-year-olds were highest at bachelor's and advanced degree attainment (Table 2). People 75 years and older had lower education levels (among those measured here) than any other age group. The differences between the highest and lowest age groups were often quite substantial. Among the 45- to 49-year-old group, 86 percent had a high school or greater education, compared with only 61 percent of people 75 and over. In these two age groups, completion of some college or more was reported by 59 percent and 30 percent, respectively. The 50- to 54-year-old group recorded a 29 percent rate of bachelor's or higher degree attainment, while only 13 percent of the population 75 years or older had that level of education. Advanced degrees were obtained by 13 percent of the 50- to 54-year-old population, but only 5 percent of the population 75 and older.

The youngest age group (25 to 29 years) had rates of educational attainment slightly lower than people aged 45 to 54. For example, 86 percent of people aged 45 to 49 had completed high school, compared with 84 percent of those aged 25 to 29. The largest gap was at the advanced degree level, where 13 percent of 50- to 54-year-olds had received an advanced degree, compared with only 6 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds. However, if 25- to 29-year-olds in 2000 were like those observed in previous censuses, many had not yet completed advanced education.[4]

Figure 3.

Population 25 Years and Over Who Have Completed High School or College: 1940 to 2000

(In percent. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, sampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)



Note: Prior to 1990, educational attainment was measured by years of completed schooling.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3; previous censuses.

The 25- to 29-year-old population was more likely to have completed some college or more, and was more likely to have earned a bachelor's degree than people 10 to 15 years their senior. The rate of completion of some college was 58 percent among those in the 25- to 29-year age group, while it was 56 percent among those in the 35- to 39-year age group, and 57 percent among those in the 40- to 44-year age group. Similarly, 27 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had completed a bachelor's degree or more, while 26 percent of those in the older groups (35 to 39 and 40 to 44) had reached this educational level.

Women's educational levels were close to those of men.

Sex differences in educational attainment were not as large as the range of disparities by age.[5] Men and women had nearly equal rates of high school completion in 2000, with women having the slight edge, 81 percent compared with 80 percent. At higher levels of education, men had higher completion rates. For example, among people 25 years or older in 2000, 26 percent of men had bachelor's degrees or more, compared with 23 percent of women. Men also led women in holding advanced degrees, 10 percent to 8 percent.

[4] In 1990, for example, 4.1 percent of the 25- to 29-year-old population held advanced degrees. Ten years later, 8.4 percent of the 35- to 39-year-old population held advanced degrees.

[5] The gap in educational attainment between people aged 50 to 54 and those aged 75 or older was significantly greater than the gap between men and women at each level of education.

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Table 2.
Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Over by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic or Latino Origin: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)

Characteristic	Population 25 and over	Percent			
		High school graduate or more	Some college or more	Bachelor's degree or more	Advanced degree
Total	**182,211,639**	**80.4**	**51.8**	**24.4**	**8.9**
Age					
25 to 29 years	19,212,244	83.6	58.3	27.2	5.9
30 to 34 years	20,365,113	84.2	57.9	27.9	8.4
35 to 39 years	23,083,337	84.7	56.5	25.9	8.4
40 to 44 years	22,822,134	85.4	56.7	25.9	9.1
45 to 49 years	20,181,127	86.4	59.5	28.5	11.3
50 to 54 years	17,397,482	85.4	58.5	29.1	12.7
55 to 59 years	13,383,251	81.1	50.6	24.6	11.5
60 to 64 years	10,787,979	76.1	43.5	20.3	9.3
65 to 69 years	9,569,199	72.1	38.9	18.3	8.0
70 to 74 years	8,931,950	67.3	34.9	16.2	6.7
75 years and over	16,477,823	60.7	29.6	13.3	5.4
Sex					
Men	87,077,686	80.1	52.5	26.1	10.0
Women	95,133,953	80.7	51.1	22.8	7.8
Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin					
White alone	143,085,659	83.6	54.1	26.1	9.5
Black or African American alone	19,858,095	72.3	42.5	14.3	4.8
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1,350,998	70.9	41.7	11.5	3.9
Asian alone	6,640,671	80.4	64.6	44.1	17.4
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	206,675	78.3	44.6	13.8	4.1
Some other race alone	7,611,121	46.8	25.0	7.3	2.3
Two or more races	3,458,420	73.3	48.1	19.6	7.0
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	18,270,377	52.4	30.3	10.4	3.8
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	133,786,263	85.5	55.4	27.0	9.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3.

The "Asian alone" race group led in attaining bachelor's and advanced degrees.

Census 2000 allowed respondents to choose more than one race. With the exception of the Two or more races group, all race groups discussed in this report refer to people who indicated *only one* racial identity among the six major categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Some other race.[5] The use of the single-race population in this report does not imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches.[7]

Large differences among races existed at all levels of education. In 2000, the proportion of people aged 25 and over who had completed high school or more education ranged from 84 percent of those who reported they were White (and no other race), to 47 percent of people who reported Some other race only.[8] People who reported they were Asian (and no other race) were most likely to report having completed higher

[5] For further information on each of the six major race groups and the Two or more races population, see reports from the Census 2000 Brief series (C2KBR/01), available on the Census 2000 Web site at *www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html*.

[7] This report draws heavily on Summary File 3, a Census 2000 product that can be accessed through American FactFinder, available from the Census Bureau's Web site, *www.census.gov*. Information on people who reported more than one race, such as "White ***and*** American Indian and Alaska Native" or "Asian ***and*** Black or African American," is available in Summary File 4, also available through American FactFinder. About 2.6 percent of people reported more than one race.

[8] Hereafter this report uses the term Black to refer to people who are Black or African American, the term Pacific Islander to refer to people who are Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and the term Hispanic to refer to people who are Hispanic or Latino.

Because Hispanics may be of any race, data in this report for Hispanics overlap with data for racial groups. Based on Census 2000 sample data, the proportion Hispanic was 8.0 percent for Whites, 1.9 percent for Blacks, 14.6 percent for American Indians and Alaska Natives, 1.0 percent for Asians, 9.5 percent for Pacific Islanders, 97.1 percent for those reporting Some other race, and 31.1 percent for those reporting Two or more races.

levels of education (some college, bachelor's or advanced degrees). Among the Asian population, 44 percent had a bachelor's degree, compared with 26 percent of the White population, 20 percent of people who reported two or more races, 14 percent of the Black population, 14 percent of the Pacific Islander population, 11 percent of the American Indian and Alaska Native population, and 7 percent of the Some other race population.

The percentage of Hispanics completing high school or more was 52 percent, compared with 85 percent of non-Hispanic Whites (single race). A large gap between the Hispanic population and the non-Hispanic White population is also seen at other levels of education. While 27 percent of non-Hispanic Whites had a bachelor's degree or more, only 10 percent of Hispanics had reached this education level.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Regional education differentials shifted during the 1990s.

No one region can lay claim to having the best-educated population.[9] The rank depended on the level of education being examined (Table 1). The Midwest had the largest percentage of its population 25 and over holding a high school diploma or more (83 percent), while the West had the largest percentage having completed at least some college (58 percent). The population in the Northeast had the highest bachelor's degree and advanced degree levels, 27 percent and 11 percent, respectively. The South had the lowest completion rates from high school through college, but the Midwest had the lowest advanced degree completion rate, at 8 percent.[10]

Growth in educational attainment from 1990 to 2000 occurred in all four United States regions. In the West, which started the decade as one of the leaders at every level of education, growth was slower than in other regions.

The South and the Midwest jointly had the largest growth in the percentage with high school or more education, both growing by 6 percentage points between 1990 and 2000. The lowest growth was in the West, which saw only a 2 percentage-point increase over the decade. The percentage with some college or more education grew by 8 percentage points in the Midwest, but 4 percentage points in the West.

The net effect of these changes was to narrow differences across regions in the percentage holding high school diplomas or higher degrees. In 1990 the West led this category, with 79 percent, and the South trailed with 71 percent, a difference of 7 percentage points. In 2000, the difference between the leading region, the Midwest, and the lowest region, the South, was only 6 percentage points.

A different pattern was observed at the high end of the educational range, due to growth in the percentage with bachelor's and advanced degrees in the Northeast, which was already the leading region on these measures. The percentage with bachelor's or higher degrees increased by 5 points in the Northeast, compared with 4 points in the West. In 1990, a gap of 2.6 points in the percentage with advanced degrees existed between the Northeast (which was highest in both censuses) and the Midwest (the lowest in both censuses). In 2000, the gap between these two regions had grown to 3.1 percentage points.

States with low high school completion rates were catching up.

Alaska, Minnesota, Wyoming, Utah, New Hampshire, Montana, Washington, and Colorado were among the highest in percentage of people 25 and over with high school or more education, while Mississippi had the lowest percentage, 73 percent.[11] As with the regions, however, differences among states narrowed from 1990 to 2000. The six states with the lowest percentage having high school or more education in 1990 (Mississippi, Kentucky, West Virginia, Arkansas, Alabama, and Tennessee) were among the states with the largest growth over the next decade. Mississippi's rate of high school completion grew by

[9] The Northeast region includes the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The Midwest region includes the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The South region includes the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia, a state equivalent. The West region includes the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

[10] The percentage with advanced degrees in the Midwest was 7.9 percent, the percentage in the South was 8.1 percent. This difference is small, but statistically significant.

[11] While any of Alaska, Minnesota or Wyoming could have ranked number 1, given the margin of measurement error, they could have ranked as low as number 3, number 4 or number 5, respectively. That means that Utah or New Hampshire might rank in the top three states. All five states had high school graduation rates that might have fallen at 88 percent or above, given statistical error and rounding.

8.6 percentage points.[12] Kentucky had a more than 9 percentage-point increase in high school completion from 1990 to 2000 (West Virginia's growth was not statistically different).

The state with the highest proportion of people 25 and over having at least some college education was Colorado, at 64 percent. The largest growth in the percentage at this education level occurred in Minnesota.

The District of Columbia had the highest percentage of its population holding bachelors or higher degrees and also had the highest percentage with advanced degrees. In 2000, 39 percent of District residents had a bachelor's degree or more, and 21 percent had advanced degrees. Unlike the 50 states, Washington, DC, is entirely urban, and this urban population had high percentages at both ends of the educational scale. In contrast to its high ranking in bachelor's and advanced degrees, the District of Columbia ranked in the bottom third in the percentage with a high school diploma or more.

The state with the second highest percentage of its 25-and-over population holding bachelors and advanced degrees was Massachusetts. In 2000, 33 percent of Massachusetts' residents 25 and over had at least a bachelor's degree, and 14 percent had advanced degrees. Massachusetts also had the highest growth in percentage with bachelor's degrees from 1990 to 2000. Although Massachusetts' growth in percentage with advanced degrees trailed the District of Columbia's growth, it was a strong second place, allowing it to bypass Connecticut and Maryland in the ranking of advanced degrees.

[12] Kentucky, West Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina all experienced growth in high school completion of 8 percentage points or more.

College graduates lived in suburban counties and counties with colleges.

The geographic distribution of college completion rates by United States county can be seen in Figure 4. High percentages of college graduates were found in metropolitan counties on the East and West coasts. A large concentration of high education counties formed a band from Albemarle County, Virginia, to Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Other counties included part of the San Francisco area, and King County, Washington, containing the city of Seattle.

Counties with high percentages of college graduates were also scattered across much of the central part of the country, around metropolitan areas and in college towns. For example, a cluster of high-education counties was found near Atlanta, Georgia, complemented by Clarke and Oconee counties, east of Atlanta, which contain a major university. Similar patterns of suburban and college-town concentrations of college graduates can be seen in states such as Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. The metropolitan counties with high college education levels often exclude the county with a central city. For example, 49 percent of the 25-and-over population of Hamilton County, Indiana, had bachelor's degrees. This county is just north of Marion county, which contains the city of Indianapolis. The proportion with bachelor's degrees in Marion County was only 25 percent, significantly lower than Hamilton County but above the national average.

The Western states have many counties with large geographic size but sparse populations. Areas with highly college-educated populations in Colorado and nearby mountain states included three types of counties: suburban counties around Denver, several counties with large universities, and a number of counties with resort and vacation areas.

Places with universities attracted the greatest concentration of people with doctoral degrees.

The places most likely to have people with doctoral degrees are university towns like Cambridge, Massachusetts, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Berkeley, California (Table 3).[13] In Cambridge, Massachusetts, nearly 1 in 10 residents 25 and over had a doctorate. All the other places with the highest percentage holding doctoral degrees were cities with universities enrolling at least 20,000 students, with the exception of Durham, North Carolina.[14] Durham, however, has a major university nearby, along with a large concentration of companies performing scientific research and related activities.

[13] Census 2000 showed 245 places in the United States with 100,000 or more population. They included 238 incorporated places (including 4 city-county consolidations) and 7 census designated places that were not legally incorporated. For a list of these places by state, see *www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/phc-t6.html*.

The percentage with doctorates in Cambridge is not significantly higher than that in Ann Arbor but is significantly higher than Berkeley. Ann Arbor and Berkeley are not significantly different. Cambridge, Ann Arbor, and Berkeley are all significantly higher than the other places listed in Table 3.

[14] Enrollment statistics for individual universities were obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics "College Opportunities On-Line" database, *http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/*.

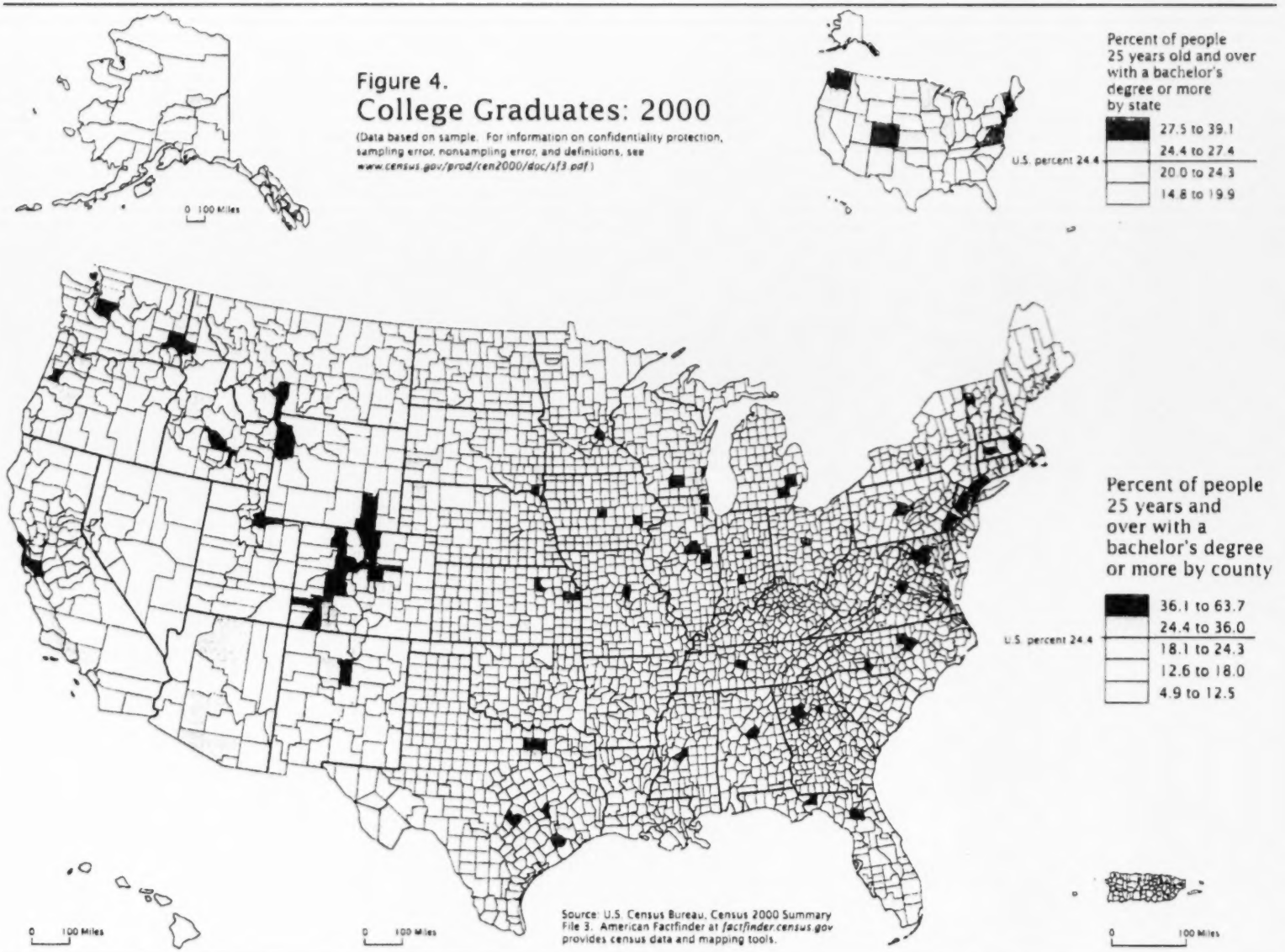
Figure 4.
College Graduates: 2000
(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)
Percent of people 25 years old and over with a bachelor's degree or more by state
27.5 to 39.1
24.4 to 27.4
20.0 to 24.3
14.8 to 19.9
U.S. percent 24.4
Percent of people 25 years and over with a bachelor's degree or more by county
36.1 to 63.7
24.4 to 36.0
18.1 to 24.3
12.6 to 18.0
4.9 to 12.5
U.S. percent 24.4
0 100 Miles
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3. American Factfinder at factfinder.census.gov provides census data and mapping tools.

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Table 3.
Ten Places of 100,000 or More Population With the Highest Percentage of People 25 and Over With Doctoral Degrees: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)

Place	People with doctoral degrees		
	Number	Percent of population 25 and over	90-percent confidence interval
Cambridge, MA	6,370	9.6	9.1 - 10.1
Ann Arbor, MI	6,045	9.3	8.8 - 9.9
Berkeley, CA	5,347	8.1	7.6 - 8.6
Athens-Clarke County, GA*	3,015	5.8	5.3 - 6.3
Madison, WI	5,386	4.2	4.0 - 4.5
Durham, NC	4,784	4.1	3.8 - 4.3
Irvine, CA	3,589	4.0	3.7 - 4.4
Tallahassee, FL	3,002	3.8	3.4 - 4.1
Fort Collins, CO	2,506	3.7	3.4 - 4.1
New Haven, CT	2,473	3.4	3.1 - 3.7

*Athens-Clarke County, Georgia, is a census designated place (CDP). CDPs comprise densely settled concentrations of population that are identifiable by name but are not legally incorporated places.

Note: Doctoral degrees include PhD and EdD degrees. Because of sampling error, the estimates in this table may not be significantly different from one another or from rates for other geographic areas not listed in this table.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3.

Table 4.
Ten Places of 100,000 or More Population With the Highest Percentage of People 25 and Over With Less Than a High School Diploma: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)

Place	People with less than a high school diploma		
	Number	Percent of population 25 and over	90-percent confidence interval
East Los Angeles, CA*	43,452	66.3	65.5 - 67.2
Santa Ana, CA	101,475	56.8	56.2 - 57.3
El Monte, CA	34,813	55.8	54.8 - 56.7
Hialeah, FL	78,059	50.2	49.6 - 50.8
Brownsville, TX	36,762	48.3	47.5 - 49.1
Miami, FL	119,435	47.3	46.8 - 47.8
Laredo, TX	42,426	45.2	44.5 - 45.9
Pomona, CA	35,529	45.1	44.2 - 45.9
Salinas, CA	37,185	44.0	43.2 - 44.8
Newark, NJ	69,135	42.1	41.5 - 42.6

* East Los Angeles, California, is a census designated place (CDP) and is not legally incorporated.

Note: Because of sampling error, the estimates in this table may not be significantly different from one another or from rates for other geographic areas not listed in this table.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3.

California, Texas, Florida, and New Jersey were home to places with a large percentage of people with less than a high school diploma.

The ten places of 100,000 or more with the highest percentages of people aged 25 and over who had not completed high school were certain urban areas in California, Texas, Florida, and New Jersey (Table 4). One characteristic shared by many of these places was a high percentage of Hispanics in the population. However, Newark's Hispanic population was relatively small. Five of the ten had a large percentage of foreign born (East Los Angeles, Santa Ana, and El Monte in California; Hialeah and Miami in Florida). Six of the places were high poverty areas, with over 20 percent of families in poverty (East Los Angeles and El Monte, California; Brownsville and Laredo, Texas; Miami, Florida; and Newark, New Jersey).

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Do younger and older men and women have the same educational differences?

According to results of Census 2000 discussed earlier, women were more likely to have a high school diploma, while men were more likely to have a bachelor's or higher degree. However, sex differences in education varied along the age spectrum (Figure 5). Completion of high school became increasingly common moving from the over-75 age group, in which women and men had graduation rates of 60 percent and 61 percent, respectively, to the 50- to 54-age group, in which 86 percent of women and 85 percent of men completed high school. For each age group 50 years and over, the percentages of men and women completing high school were close, with the difference never reaching more than 2 percentage points.

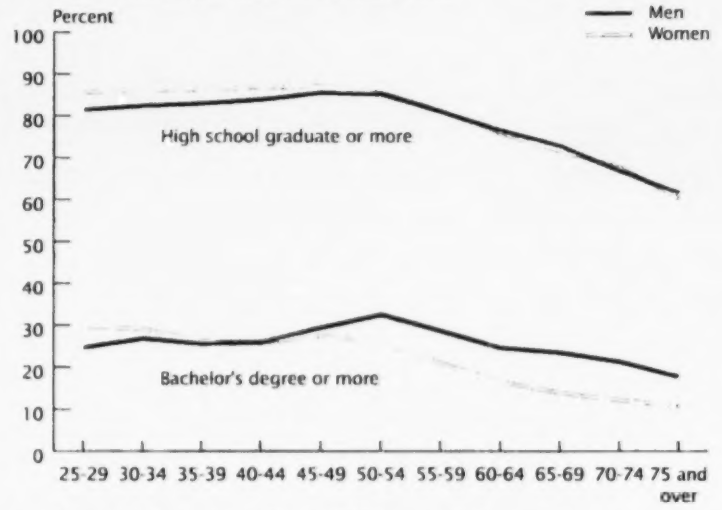
Among younger men and women, under the age of 50, high school graduation rates diverged. Younger men aged 25 to 29 were less likely to complete high school than men aged 50 to 54, while younger women were slightly more likely to complete high school than 50- to 54-year-old women. Women below the age of 50 were also more likely than men of the same age to graduate from high school.

As with high school graduation, bachelor's degree completion showed a change between those above and below the age of 50. Both men and women aged 75 and over (born in 1925 or earlier), had low rates of college completion, while those aged 50 to 54 (born between 1945 and 1950) had much higher rates. However, across all age groups from 50 on up, men maintained a fairly stable 7 to 10 percentage point advantage over women in college completion.

Those younger than 50 (born since 1950) showed a much different pattern. College graduation rates were lower among younger men (age 25 to 44) born later in the twentieth century than they were for men born just after 1950 (age 45 to 49). By contrast, younger women aged 25 to 34 increased their rate of college completion above and beyond the level of their elders in the 45- to 49-year-old age group. In the 25- to 39-age ranges, women surpassed men in college completion as well.

Figure 5.
Differences in Educational Attainment by Sex and Age: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, sampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3.

ABOUT CENSUS 2000

Why Census 2000 asked about educational attainment.

Government agencies require data on educational attainment for funding allocations and program planning and implementation. The Voting Rights Act requires information on education to determine the extent of illiteracy among language minorities. In addition, funding for school districts that provide classes to adults who have not completed high school is based on these data. Other federal applications include: the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Evaluation, the Americans With Disabilities Act, the National Science Foundation Biennial Report, the Bilingual Education Act, and the Older Americans Act. Local governments use information on educational attainment to attract potential employers to their areas.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

The data contained in this report are based on the sample of households who responded to the Census 2000 long form. Nationally, approximately 1 out of every 6 housing units was included in this sample. As a result, the sample estimates may differ somewhat from the100-percent figures that would have been obtained if all housing units, people within those housing units, and people living in group quarters had been enumerated using the same questionnaires, instructions, enumerators, and so forth. The sample estimates also differ from the values that would have been obtained from different samples of housing units, people within those housing units, and people living in group quarters. The deviation of a sample estimate from the average of all possible samples is called the sampling error.

In addition to the variability that arises from the sampling procedures, both sample data and 100-percent data are subject to nonsampling error. Nonsampling error may be introduced during any of the various complex operations used to collect and process data. Such errors may include: not enumerating every household or every person in the population, failing to obtain all required information from the respondents, obtaining incorrect or inconsistent information, and recording information incorrectly. In addition, errors can occur during the field review of the enumerators' work, during clerical handling of the

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census questionnaires, or during the electronic processing of the questionnaires.

Nonsampling error may affect the data in two ways: (1) errors that are introduced randomly will increase the variability of the data and, therefore, should be reflected in the standard errors; and (2) errors that tend to be consistent in one direction will bias both sample and 100-percent data in that direction. For example, if respondents consistently tend to underreport their incomes, then the resulting estimates of households or families by income category will tend to be understated for the higher income categories and overstated for the lower income categories. Such biases are not reflected in the standard errors.

While it is impossible to completely eliminate error from an operation as large and complex as the decennial census, the Census Bureau attempts to control the sources of such error during the data collection and processing operations. The primary sources of error and the programs instituted to control error in Census 2000 are described in detail in *Summary File 3 Technical Documentation* under Chapter 8, "Accuracy of the Data," located at *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*.

All statements in this Census 2000 Brief have undergone statistical testing and all comparisons are significant at the 90-percent confidence level, unless otherwise noted. The estimates in tables, maps, and other figures may vary from actual values due to sampling and nonsampling errors. As a result, estimates in one category may not be significantly different from estimates assigned to a different category. Further information on the accuracy of the data is located at *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*. For further information on the computation and use of standard errors, contact the Decennial Statistical Studies Division at 301-763-4242.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Census 2000 Summary File 3 data are available from the American Factfinder on the Internet (*factfinder.census.gov*). They were released on a state-by-state basis during 2002. For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, sampling error, and definitions, also see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf* or contact the Customer Services Center at 301-763-INFO (4636).

Information on population and housing topics is presented in the Census 2000 Brief series, located on the Census Bureau's Web site at *www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html*. This series presents information on race, Hispanic origin, age, sex, household type, housing tenure, and social, economic, and housing characteristics, such as ancestry, income, and housing costs.

For additional information on educational attainment in the United States, including reports and survey data, visit the Census Bureau's Internet site at *www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/educ-attn.html*. To find information about the availability of data products, including reports, CD-ROMs, and DVDs, call the Customer Services Center at 301-763-INFO (4636), or e-mail *webmaster@census.gov*.

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